

Pedestal PRO and Convergent Technologies Prove that Premium Service Is a Team Effort

Security integrators sell technology, but it's their attention to customer service that separates the wheat from the chaff. Look no further than Convergent Technologies, ranked as the industry's #1 Systems Integrator by SDM Magazine for the last two years in a row. Tony Varco, Vice President of Security & Marketing for Convergent Technologies, explains, "Convergent has differentiated itself by building a service-centric culture with colleagues who care. Pedestal PRO shares in our deep dedication to service excellence, and our partnership has been natural because of that."

Pike Goss, Pedestal PRO's CEO, says, "We, at Pedestal PRO, deeply appreciate our long-standing partnership with Convergent. Some of the principals at Convergent took us under their wing about 10 years ago and really helped to lift us off the ground by incorporating our solutions into their projects, boosting our visibility and reputation." Since then, Pedestal PRO has thrived, becoming the leading manufacturer of free-standing mount solutions for security technologies like intercoms, card readers, keypads, cameras and other devices.

Today, the supportive dynamic between the two companies flows both ways, with each relying on the other to drive their mutual success.

"Like Convergent, our top priority is delivering a positive customer experience – and that extends well beyond manufacturing the highest quality of products. The service we provide is every bit as important," says Pike. That commitment was on full display during a recent project spearheaded by Convergent's Pleasanton, California office. The company was in the midst of installing security systems at a prestigious new high-rise when the project encountered a series of snafus that could have caused missed deadlines and

reduced margins. But, with the help of Pedestal PRO, the issues barely registered as a speed bump. “Convergint was the face of this project, so it was really important to us to do everything we could to back up their reputation,” says Pike. And they did!

The Project

The job was new construction; an architecturally magnificent apartment building housing over 200 luxury units, with underground parking and retail on the ground floor. Convergint began work on the site in October 2019, hired as a sub-contractor responsible for the building’s security systems.

Convergint guided the property manager and building developer in the selection of specific technology solutions. A Lenel OnGuard system would manage access control while a 2N IP intercom system would support visitor management. Devices for both systems would be present at two lobby entrances, as well as at the entryway to the parking garage. Residents, and credentialed employees, would gain entrance using Lenel Blue Diamond Bluetooth Readers. If residents forgot their credentials, the 2N intercom could serve as backup, allowing them to call security management for assistance. In addition, the 2N system could be used by visitors to directly contact residents listed in the building’s directory. Residents would be notified, via a mobile app, allowing them to “see” and communicate with their visitor as well as remotely unlock the door– even if they themselves were not in the building at the time. This feature of the 2N system, designed specifically for residential properties, was key in its selection over other manufacturers’ technologies.

Three free-standing stanchions, located at the lobby and parking garage entrances, would house the Lenel readers and 2N intercom devices. One lobby entrance would

feature a 2N IP Verso to allow for visitors to contact residents directly; the other two would employ a 2N IP Solo model monitored by the property's security team.

Construction proceeded through late 2019 and into 2020, even as the COVID-19 pandemic began to impact many businesses. With tenants due to move in on June 1, hitting "pause" was not an option. By late March, electrical and security systems were coming together. Convergint was ready to install the stanchions at each of the entrances. What could go wrong?

The "Uh Oh" Moment

Stanchions, from Pedestal PRO, had been ordered for the three locations where readers and intercoms required mounting. Unfortunately, somewhere within the chain of communication between customer, electrical contractor and Convergint, the customer's vision for custom-built, stainless steel towers to house the devices was "lost in translation." Convergint Project Manager, Harrison Walsh explains, "The units were approved, and ordered, but when they arrived on site and the boxes were opened, the electrical contractor just looked at them and said, 'What are these?'"

Inside the boxes were powder-coated, black, gooseneck bollards.

Pike explains, "There are two categories of pedestal solutions, *industrial* and *architectural*. Attractive in their own way, those goosenecks would have been perfect for a parking lot or other industrial application, but were not right for this project. Those pedestals were going to be the first things tenants and visitors see when they arrive. The building needed a more elegant presentation: brushed, stainless steel *architectural* tower-style pedestals – not our more cost-effective, *industrial* models."

Relatively new to Convergent, Harrison was unsure how to proceed. He reached out to his supervisor, Bryan Whittington, who immediately directed him to contact Pedestal PRO.

"We've worked with Pedestal PRO for years," says Bryan, "and I knew they wouldn't let us down. This problem wasn't one they created, but given how committed they are to customer service, I knew they'd do everything possible to help us make it right."

Jumping Through Hoops

Harrison reached out to Pedestal PRO late on a Thursday evening. In fact, he contacted Pike directly. "I explained the situation to him, and we talked for close to an hour. We ran through everything: what devices needed to be housed, where they'd be positioned, the units' height, the desired style and finish of the stanchions, and Pike's team set to work developing a set of custom drawings to illustrate their proposed solutions. By the following day, Pedestal PRO had provided us with drawings that precisely met the customer's expectations and for which we were able to obtain almost immediate approval. Manufacturing began within 24 hours. It was amazing."

Fast turn-around is a service Pedestal PRO's customers rely on. "We offer a full line of beautiful, architectural, stainless steel towers," says Pike, "so getting him what he needed was simply a matter of identifying a style with the desired appearance and then customizing it to support the specified Lenel and 2N devices. Because we cater extensively to the security industry, we offer a lot of off-the-shelf options, where the pedestal already includes cut-outs and mounting holes to match devices from various manufacturers. Those units we can often ship within 24 hours. But the specifics of this job required custom work. That obviously takes a bit longer – typically 12-15 business days."

“We were already in the midst of the COVID-19 situation,” says Harrison, “so I was expecting that it might take longer than usual. But they actually got things done sooner.”

Pike explains, “We offer an expedite program, where we are able to rush through projects like this, and Convergent requested a rush on the project. COVID or no COVID, they needed the pedestals ASAP and we were going to get them there.” The finished units arrived on-site less than one week from Harrison’s initial call.

Problem solved? Not quite. A week or so went by, and Harrison was back on the phone with Pike.

The tower built for the parking garage was an inch and a half too short. Pedestal PRO had constructed it correctly, based on the drawings provided, but those drawings didn’t account for the paver that would be at the base of the unit. As a result, the push buttons on the intercom would not be positioned at the precise height required by city code.

Once again, Pedestal PRO jumped into action. And once again, a new custom unit was drawn up and delivered pronto – within three days of Harrison’s second call. This time, Pedestal PRO even picked up the tab. “We only charged Convergent for the shipping. We wanted to ensure Convergent was solving these challenges seamlessly for their customer,” says Pike.

“Stainless steel stanchions are not exactly cheap,” says Harrison. “The fact that they took care of this for us was a huge, huge help. And we were able to resolve this so quickly that the customer never even knew there was a problem.”

COVID Creativity

Pedestal PRO turned around both emergency projects for Convergent as if things were “normal” back at its factory in Lindon, Utah. However, behind the scenes, they were anything but! By the end of March, much of the country was on lock down due to the COVID-19 crisis, and businesses still open were facing unprecedented operational challenges to keep employees safe and healthy.

“We had to get creative,” says Pike. “We’re a manufacturer, so we don’t have the liberty of just telling everyone they can work from home. We can do that with our office staff, but it’s not an option for our manufacturing crew. We had to find ways to reduce exposure possibilities for them.”

Glenn Groesbeck, Sales Engineer at Pedestal PRO, is responsible for managing much of the company’s custom work, which included the new towers for Convergent. He says, “The company was conscientious of everybody’s health and safety. They gave everyone the option to work from home who could. For the rest of us, we shifted from having one full crew to having two half crews. One worked Monday through Wednesday and the other Thursday through Saturday, each with extended work days. That gave everyone twice as much space in the warehouse and assembly areas to stay safely apart. Considering the circumstances, I was really impressed with how everyone functioned to make this happen as efficiently as possible.”

Dedicated Partners Create Satisfied Customers

Once on site, installation of the new pedestals was straightforward. As with all Pedestal PRO units, the holes were prefabricated to align with the specific reader and intercom models that would be used. “It was all very fast. Setting the bolts was the part that took the longest,” says Harrison. “I noticed that the company puts a removeable back plate on their pedestals, which makes me a huge fan. Because if I ever need to service the

technology inside, it's way easier than using most stanchions. I don't have to pull the whole thing off. I can just take off the back plate and get to whatever needs fixing."

Now in place, the new tower pedestals will optimize the user experience for residents and visitors engaging with the 2N and Lenel systems, while blending seamlessly with the building's clean, modern vibe. Each tower features classic lines, a brushed stainless steel finish and mirrored corners.

Harrison says, "This is the first time I've worked with Pedestal PRO. Start-to-finish, I can't emphasize enough how responsive they've been; how willing they were to jump through hoops to make sure this got done exactly to the customer's specifications. They were a huge stress reliever, making my life a lot easier."

"Harrison really wanted to take care of his customer, and we really wanted to take care of Harrison," responds Pike. "Plus, there was more in play here than just business. It was a chance for us to return the favor for all the ways that Convergent has contributed to our success through the years. I guess you could say it was a little bit sentimental."